THE VANITY OF THOVGHTS DISCOVERED:

WITH

THEIR DANGER AND CVRE.

BY

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2 Thess. 1.1. 1
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THE VANITIE OF THOVGHTS.

JEREM. 4. 14.

How long ſhall thy vaine thoughts lodge within thee?

IN theſe words he compares the heart unto ſome houſe of common reſort, made as it were with many and large roomes to entertaine and lodge multitudes of Gueſts in; into which, before converſion, all the vaine, light, wanton, prophane, diſſolute thoughts, that poſte up and downe the World (as your thoughts doe) and runne ryot all the day, have free open acceſs; the heart keeps open houſe to them, gives them willing, cheerefull welcome, and entertainment; ac-

companies them, travels o're all the world for the daintieſt pleaſures to feed them with; *Lodgeth*, harbours them, and there they, like unruly Gallants, and royſters, *lodge*, and revell it day and night, and defile thoſe roomes they lodge in, with their loathſome filth and vomits. *How long*, ſayes the Lord, *ſhall they lodge therein? Whilſt I* with my Spirit, my Son, and traine of graces, *ſtand at the doore and knock, Rev. 3. 20.* and cannot finde admittance; of all which filthineſs, &c. the *Heart* this houſe muſt bee *waſhed*; *waſh thy heart from wickedneſs. Waſht*, not ſwept onely of groſſer evills (as *Matth. 12. 43.* the *houſe*, (*the uncleane ſpirit re-enters into*) is ſaid to be ſwept of evills that lay looſe and uppermoſt) but *waſht*, and cleanſed of thoſe defilements which ſticke more cloſe, and are incorporated, and wrought in, into the Spirit. And 2. thoſe *vaine* and unruly gueſts muſt be turned out of doores, without any warning, they have ſtaid there long enough; too long; *How long?* and the *time paſt may ſuffice*, as the Apoſtle ſpeakes, they muſt lodge there no more. The houſe the ſoule is not in converſion to be puld downe, but onely theſe gueſts turned out; and though kept out they cannot be, they will ſtill enter whilſt we are in theſe houſes of clay, yet lodge they muſt not: if thoughts of anger and revenge come in, in the morning or day time, they muſt bee turned out e're night, *Let not the Sunne goe downe upon your wrath, Ephe. 4. 26.* For ſo you may come to lodge

lodge yet a worſer gueſt in your heart with them: *Give not place to the Devill,* (for it follows) who will *bring ſeven worſe with him.* If uncleane thoughts offer to come to bed to thee, when thou lieſt downe, let them not lodge with thee. To conclude, it is not what thoughts are in your hearts, and paſſe through them, as what lodging they have, that doth difference your repentance: many good thoughts and motions may paſſe, as *Strangers* thorough a bad mans heart; and ſo likewiſe multitudes of vaine thoughts may make a thorow-fare of a beleevers heart, and diſturbe him in good duties, by knockings and interruptions, and breakings in upon the heart of a good man; but ſtill they lodge not there; are not foſtered, harboured.

2 My ſcope in our ordinary courſe is, to diſcover the wickedneſſe and vanity of the heart by nature: in the heart we are yet but in the upper parts of it, the underſtanding, and the defilements thereof, which are to bee waſht out of it, and the next defilement, which in my broken order I meane to handle, is that which is here ſpecified, *the vanity of your thoughts:* for the diſcovery ſake of which onely, I choſe this text, as my ground; *That* is it, therefore, which I will chiefly inſiſt upon. A *ſubject* which, I confeſſe, would prove of all elſe the vaſteſt. To make an exact particular diſcovery of the vanities in our thoughts, to travell over the whole Creation, and to take a ſurvey, and give an account of all

that vanitie abounds in all the creatures, was (as you know) the taske of the wiſeſt of men, *Solomon*; the flowre of his ſtudies and labours: But the *vanity of our thoughts* are as multiplyed much in us, this *little world* affoords more varieties of vanities, than the Great. Our thoughts made the *creatures ſubject to vanitie*, *Rom.* 8. 20. therefore themſelves are ſubject to vanity much more. In handling of them I will ſhew you, 1. what is meant by *Thoughts*. 2. *What* by *vanity*. 3. *That our thoughts are vaine*. 4. Wherein that vanity doth conſiſt, both in the generall, and ſome particulars.

Firſt, what is *meant by thoughts*, eſpecially as they are the intended ſubject of this diſcourſe, which in ſo vaſt an argument I muſt neceſſarily ſet limits unto: 1. by *thoughts*, the Scriptures do comprehend all the *internall* acts of the mind of man, of what facultie ſoever, all thoſe reaſonings, conſultations, purpoſes, reſolutions, intents, ends, deſires, and cares of the mind of man, as oppoſed to our *externall* words and actions, ſo *Iſay* 66. 18. All acts are divided into thoſe two, *I know their works and their thoughts*: what is tranſacted within the mind is called the *thoughts*; what thereof do manifeſt themſelves, and breake out in actions, are called *workes*. And ſo *Geneſ.* 6. 5. *Every imagination of the thoughts*, (*omne figmentum*) all the creatures the mind frames within it ſelfe, purpoſes, deſires, &c. (as it is noted in the margin) *are evill*; where by thoughts are underſtood

derſtood all that *comes within the minde*, (as *Ezech.* 11. 5. the phraſe is) and ſo indeed wee vulgarly uſe it, and underſtand it, ſo *To remember* a man, is, to *thinke of him*, *Gen.* 40. 14. to have *purpoſed* a thing, wee ſay, *I thought to doe it*. To take *care* about a buſineſſe, is to *take thought*, 1 *Sam.* 9. 5. And the reaſon, why all may thus be called *the thoughts*, is, becauſe indeed, all affections, deſires, purpoſes, are ſtirred up by thoughts, bred, fomented, and nouriſhed by them: no one thought paſſeth, but it ſtirreth ſome affection of feare, joy, care, griefe, &c. No, although they are thus *largely* taken here, yet I intend not to handle the *vanity* of them in ſo large a ſenſe at preſent: I muſt confine my ſelfe, as ſtrictly as may be, to the vanitie of that, which is more *properly* called the *thinking*, *meditating*, *conſidering power of man*, which is in his underſtanding or ſpirit, that being the ſubject I have in hand: *Thoughts* not being in this ſenſe oppoſed onely to *your workes*, but unto purpoſes and intents, ſo *Hebr.* 4. 12. as the *Soule* and *ſpirit*, ſo thoughts and intents ſeem to be oppoſed. And *Iob* 20. 2, 3. *Thoughts* are appropriated to the *Spirit of underſtanding*. And againe yet more ſtrictly, for in the underſtanding I meane not to ſpeake of, generally, all thoughts therein, neither, as not of the *reaſonings* or *deliberations* in our actions: but thoſe *muſings* onely in the *Speculative* part.

And ſo, I can no otherwiſe expreſſe them to you, than thus; Thoſe ſame firſt, more *ſimple conceits*,

ceits, apprehenſions that ariſe; thoſe *fancies, meditations*, which the underſtanding by the *helpe of fancie frames within it ſelf of things*; thoſe wheron your minds ponder and pore, and muſe upon things, theſe I meane by *thoughts*, I meane thoſe *talkings* of our minds with the things we know, as the Scripture calls it, *Prov. 6.22.* thoſe ſame parleys, enterviews, chattings the minde hath with the things let into it, with the things wee feare, with the things wee love. For all theſe things our mindes make their companions, and our thoughts hold them diſcourſe, and have a thouſand conceits about them; this I meane by *thoughts*. For beſides that *reaſoning* power, *deliberating* power, wherby we aske our ſelves continually, *what ſhall we doe?* and whereby we reaſon and diſcuſſe things, which is a more inward cloſet, the Cabinet and privie councell of the heart, there is a more outward lodging, that preſence chamber, which entertaines all commers, which is the *thinking*, *meditating*, *muſing* power in man, which ſuggeſteth matter for deliberations, and conſultations, and reaſonings, which holds the *objects* till we view them, which entertaineth all that come to ſpeake with any of our affections.

2. I adde, which *the minde frames within it ſelfe*, ſo the Scripture expreſſeth their originall to us, and their manner of riſing, *Prov.6.14. Frowardneſs is in his heart, fabricatur*, he *forgeth miſchiefe*, as a Smith doth Iron, hammers it out.

and

and the thoughts are the materialls of this frowardneſſe in us; upon all the things which are preſented to us, the minde begets ſome thoughts, imaginations on them; and as *luſts* ſo *thoughts* are conceived, *Iames* 1. *Iſay* 59.4. *They conceive miſchiefe, and bring forth iniquity, and hatch Cockatrice egges, and weave Spiders webbs.* And verſe 7. hee inſtanceth in *thoughts if iniquity*, becauſe our thoughts are ſpunne out of our owne hearts, are egges of our owne laying, though the things preſented to us be from without.

And this I adde to ſever them from ſuch *thoughts* as are *injected*, and caſt in, onely from without, w^ch^ are children of anothers begetting, and often laid out of doores: ſuch as are blaſphemous thoughts caſt in *by Satan*, wherein if the ſoule be meerely paſſive, (as the word *Buffetting* implies, 2 *Cor.* 12.7.) they are none of your thoughts, but his; wherein a man is but as one in a roome with another, where he heares another ſweare and curſe, but cannot get out from him; ſuch thoughts, if they be onely *from without*, defile not a man. For *nothing defiles a man, but what comes from within*, *Mat.* 15.18,19. or which the heart hath begotten upon it by the devill, as thoughts, of uncleanneſſe, &c. Wherein though he be the father, yet the heart is the mother and wombe; and therefore accordingly they affect the heart, as naturall children do; and by that we may diſtinguiſh them from the other, namely, when we have a ſoft heart, an inward love unto them,

them, ſo that our hearts doe kiſſe the child, then they are our *thoughts*, or elſe when the heart broods upon theſe egges, then they are our *thoughts*, though they come from without.

Though this is to bee added, that even thoſe thoughts wherein the ſoule is paſſive, and which Satan caſts in, which wee doe no wayes owne, wherein he *raviſheth* the heart, rather than *begets* them on us, (if there bee not any conſent to them in us, then it is but a *Rape*, as in law it is not) I yeeld thoſe thoughts are puniſhments often of neglect of our thoughts, and of our ſuffering them to wander; as *Dinah* becauſe ſhe went cunningly out, *to view the Daughters of the land*, was taken and raviſht, though againſt her will: yet it was a puniſhment of her curioſity: or elſe they are the puniſhment of the neglect of good motions of the ſpirit; which reſiſting, *wee thereby grieve him*, and ſo he deales with us, as we with our children, ſuffers us to bee ſcared with bugbeares, and to be grieved by *Satan*, that we may learne what it is to neglect him, and harbour vanity. Laſtly, I adde, which the minde, *in and by it ſelfe*, or by the helpe of fancy, thus begets and entertaines, becauſe there are no thoughts or likeneſſes of things at any time in our fancies, but at the ſame time they are in the underſtanding alſo reflected unto it: as whē two Looking glaſſes are placed oppoſite & nigh each to other, look what ſpecies appeares in the one, do alſo in the other.

Secondly, let us ſee what *vanitie* is, take it in all

all the acceptations of it; It is true of our *thoughts* that they are *vaine.*

1. It is taken for *unprofitableneſſe.* So *Eccleſ.* 1. 2,3. *All is vanity*, becauſe there is no profit *in them under the Sunne*, ſuch are our thoughts by nature, the wiſeſt of them will not ſtand us in any ſtead in time of need, in time of temptation, diſtreſs of conſcience, day of death or Judgement, 1 *Cor.* 2.6. *All the wiſdome of* the wiſe comes to *nought*, *Pro.* 10.20. *The heart of the wicked is little worth*, not a penny for them all, whereas the thoughts of a godly man are his *treaſure: Out of the good treaſure of his heart, he brings them forth.* He mints them, and they are laid up as his riches. *Pſal.* 138.17. *How precious are they?* hee there ſpeaks of our *thoughts of God*, as the object of them, *thy thoughts*, that is, (*of thee*) *are precious.*

2. *Vanitie* is taken for lightneſſe. *Lighter than vanity* is a phraſe uſed *Pſal.* 62.9. and whom is it ſpoken of? *of men*, and if any thing in them be *lighter* than other, it is their *thoughts* which ſwim in the uppermoſt parts, float at the top, is as the ſcum of the heart. When all the beſt and wiſeſt, and deepeſt, and ſolideſt *thoughts* in *Balthazar* a Prince, were *weighed*, they were *found too light*, *Dan.* 5.17.

3. *Vanity* is put for *folly*. So *Prov.* 12.11. *Vaine men*, is made all one with men *void of underſtanding.* Such are our thoughts among other evils which are ſaid to come *out of the heart*, *Marke* 7.22. ἀφροσύνη is reckoned as one, *fooliſhneſſe*,

neſſe, that is, thoughts that are ſuch as *mad men* have, and fooles, nothing to the purpoſe, of which there can be made no uſe, which a man knowes not whence they ſhould come, nor whither they would, *without dependance.*

4. It is put for *Inconſtancy*, and *frailty*, therefore *vanity* and a *ſhadow* are made *Synonomaes*, *Pſal.* 144. 4. ſuch are our *thoughts*, flitting and periſhing, as bubbles, *Pſ.* 146.4. *All their thoughts periſh.*

Laſtly, they are *vaine*, that is, indeed, *wicked* and *ſinfull*; *vanity* in the text here, is yoaked with *wickedneſſe*: and *vaine men*, and *ſonnes of Belial* are all one, 2 *Chron.* 13.17. And ſuch are our thoughts by nature. *Prov.*24.9. *The thought of fooliſhneſſe* is ſinne. And therefore a man is to be humbled for a *proud thought*, *Prov.* 30.32. For ſo *laying hand* on the mouth is taken, as *Iob* 39.37. for being *vile in a mans owne eyes.*

And becauſe this is the ſenſe I chiefly muſt inſiſt on, in handling the *vanity of the thoughts*, and alſo men uſually thinke that *thoughts* are *free*; I will therefore prove this to you, which is the onely doctrine raiſed, that *Thoughts are ſins.*

1. The *Law judgeth* them, *Hebr.*4.12. *rebukes a man* for them, 1 *Cor.*14.25. and therefore they are tranſgreſſions of the law, and ſo alſo did Chriſt rebuke the Phariſees for *their ill thoughts*, *Mat.* 9.4. which argues the excellencie of the Law, that reacheth thoughts.

2. Becauſe they are *Capable of pardon*, and muſt

must be pardoned, or we cannot be saved, *Acts* 8. 22. which argues the multitudes of *GODS Compassions*, seeing thoughts are so infinite.

3. They are to bee *repented of*, yea repentance is expressed, as to begin at them. So *Esay* 55.7. *Let the unrighteous man forsake his thoughts*; and a man is never truly and throughly wrought on, (as 2 *Cor.* 10.4, 5.) *till every thought bee brought into obedience*; which argues that they are naturally rebellious, and contrary to grace. And this also argueth the *Power of grace*, which is able to *rule*, and to subdue so great an Army as our thoughts are, and command them all, as one day it will do, when we are perfectly holy.

4. *They defile the man*: which nothing defiles but sinne, *Mat.* 15.18, 19, 20. *Out of the heart proceed evill thoughts, these defile the man.*

5. They are an *abomination to the Lord*, who hates nothing but sinne, and *whose pure eyes can endure to behold no iniquity*, *Prov.* 15.26. as good *Meditations are acceptable*, *Psal.* 19. *ult.* so, by the rule of contrary, *bad* are *abominable.*

6. They *hinder* all *good* we should doe, and spoile our best performances. Vaine thoughts draw the heart away in them, that when a man should draw nigh to God, his *Heart*, by reason of his thoughts, *is farre off from him*, *Esay* 29.13. *A mans heart goes after his covetousnesse*, when he should *heare*, as the Prophet speakes, because his thoughts thus run. Now nothing else but sinne could separate, and what doth estrange us from

God, is ſinne, and enmity to him.

7. Our thoughts are the *firſt motioners of all the evill in us.* For they make the motion, and alſo bring the heart and object together; are panders to our luſts, hold up the object, till the heart hath plaid the adulterer with it, and committed folly, ſo in ſpeculative uncleanneſſe, and in other luſts, they hold up the images of thoſe gods they create, which the heart falls downe and worſhips; they preſent credit, riches, beauty, till the heart hath worſhipt them, and this when the things themſelves are abſent.

To come now to thoſe *Particulars* wherein this *vanity* of the *thinking*, meditating power of the mind conſiſts.

Firſt, I will diſcover it in regard of *thinking what is good*, how unable and loth, &c. it is to good thoughts; and ſecondly, in regard of the readineſſe *of it to thinke of evill and vaine things.*

For the firſt, firſt in *a want of ability* ordinarily, and naturally to raiſe and extract holy and uſefull conſiderations and thoughts from all ordinary occurrences, and occaſions; which the mind, ſo farre as it is ſanctified, is apt unto. A heart ſanctified, and in whoſe affections true grace is enkindled, out of all Gods dealings with him, out of the things he ſees and heares, out of all the objects are put into the thoughts, he diſtilleth holy, and ſweet, and uſefull meditations: and it naturally doth it, and ordinarily doth it, ſo farre as it is ſanctified. So our Saviour *Chriſt*, all

all ſpeeches of others which he heard, all accidents and occurrences did ſtill raiſe and occaſion in him heavenly meditations, as we may ſee throughout the whole Goſpels: when he came by a well he ſpeakes of the *Water of life Iohn* 4. &c. Many inſtances might be given; *He* in his thoughts tranſlated the booke of the creatures, into the booke of grace, and ſo did *Adams* heart in innocency: his *Philoſophie* might be truly termed *Divinity*, becauſe he ſaw God in all; all raiſed up his heart to thankfulneſſe and praiſe: So now in like manner, our minds, ſo farre as they are ſanctified, will doe. As the *Philoſophers ſtone* turnes all Metals into Gold; As the Bee ſuckes hony out of every flower, and a good ſtomack ſucks out ſome ſweet and wholeſome nouriſhment out of what it takes unto it ſelfe: ſo doth a holy heart, ſo farre as ſanctified, convert and digeſt all into ſpirituall uſefull thoughts; this you may ſee, *Pſal.* 107. *ult. That Pſalme* gives many inſtances of Gods providence, *and wonderfull workes which he doth for the ſons of men*; as deliverances by Sea, where men ſee his wonders: deliverance to Captives, &c. and ſtill the foot of the Song is, *Oh that men would therefore praiſe the Lord for the wonderfull workes he doth for the Sons of men.* Now after all theſe inſtances, he concludes, that though others paſſe over ſuch occurrences with ordinary ſlight thoughts, yet ſayes he, *The righteous ſhall ſee it, and rejoyce:* that is, extract comfortable thoughts out of all, which

ſhall be matter of joy, and *who ſo is wiſe will obſerve thoſe things*, that is, makes holy obſervations out of all theſe, and out of a principle of wiſdome he underſtands Gods goodneſſe in all; and ſo his heart is raiſed to thoughts of praiſe, and thankfulneſſe, and obedience. Now compare with this the 92. *Pſal.* made for *the Sabbath* (when in imitation of God, who that day viewed his workes, we are, on our *Lords day*, ſtill to raiſe holy praiſefull thoughts out of them to his glory, which hee that penned that *Pſalme* then did, *ver.* 1. and 2. and) *ver.* 5. *How great are thy workes, &c! A brutiſh man knows not, nor will a foole underſtand this:* that is, he being a beaſt, and having no ſanctified principle of wiſdom in him, lookes no further than a beaſt into all the workes of God, and occurrences of things; looks on all bleſſings as things provided for mans delight by God: but hee extracts ſeldome holy ſpirituall and uſefull thoughts out of all, he wants the art of doing it.

If injuries be offered us by others, what doe our thoughts diſtill out of thoſe wrongs, but thoughts of revenge? wee meditate how to requite it againe. But ſee how naturally *Davids* mind diſtils other thoughts of *Shemeis* curſing, 2 *Sam.* 16. 11. *God hath bidden him*, and it may prove a good ſigne of Gods favour. *God may requite good for it.* When we ſee judgements befall others, ſevere thoughts of cenſure our mindes are apt to raiſe againſt our brother, as *Iobs* friends

did

did. But a godly man whoſe mind is much ſanctified, raiſeth other thoughts out of it, *Prou.* 21. 22. *Wiſely conſiders, &c.*

So when outward mercies befall us, the next thoughts we are apt to have, is to project eaſe by our wealth, thou *haſt goods for many yeares*: and when judgements befall us, wee are apt to bee filled with thoughts of complaint, and feares, and cares how to wind out againe. But what were the firſt thoughts *Iob* had, upon the newes of the loſſe of all? *God hath given, and the Lord hath taken, bleſſed be the Lord for all.*

Such thoughts as theſe (which all opportunities hint unto) a good heart is apprehenſive of, and doth naturally raiſe for its owne uſe. So farre *Barren as our thoughts are, ſo farre vaine.*

Secondly, the *vanity*, and ſinfulneſſe of the mind appeares in a *loathneſſe* to *entertaine holy thoughts*, to begin to ſet it ſelfe to thinke of God, and the things belonging unto our peace; even as loath they are to this as Schoole-boyes are to goe to their Books, or to buſie their minds about their leſſons, their heads being full of play; ſo loath are our minds to enter into ſerious conſiderations, into ſad ſolemne thoughts of God, or death, &c. Men are as loath to thinke of *death*, as theeves of the *execution*; or to thinke of *God*, as they are of their Judge. So to goe over their owne actions, in a review of them, and read the blurd writing of their hearts, and to *commune with them*, at night in the end of the day, (as

David

David did, *Pſal.* 119.59.) men are as loath to do this, as Schoole-boyes are to perſe their leſſons, and the falſe Latins they have made, *Iob* 21. *Depart from us* (ſay they in *Iob*) unto God, from their thoughts they meant it, for it followes, *wee deſire not the knowledge of thy wayes.* They would not thinke of him, or know them by their good wills; and therefore our minds, like a bad ſtomack, are nauſeated with the very ſcent of good things, and ſoone caſts them up againe, *Rom.* 1. 28. *They like not to retaine the knowledge of God:* let us go and try to wind up our ſoules, at any time, to holy meditations, to thinke of what we have heard, or what we have done, or what is our duty to doe, and we ſhall find our minds, like the pegges of an Inſtrument, ſlip betweene our fingers, as wee are a winding them up, and to fall downe ſuddenly againe, ere we are aware of it: yea you ſhall find, that your minds will labour to ſhun what may occaſiō ſuch thoughts; even as men go out of the way, when they ſee they muſt meet with one they are loath to ſpeake withall; yea men dare not bee alone, for feare ſuch thoughts ſhould returne upon them. The beſt ſhall find a gladneſſe, for an excuſe, by other occaſions to knocke off their thoughts from what is good: whereas in thinking of vaine earthly things, we thinke the time paſſeth too faſt, clocks ſtrike too ſoone, howres paſſe away ere we are aware of it.

Thirdly, the *vanity* and ſinfulneſſe of the minde

minde appeares in the godly, that though they entertaine good thoughts, yet the minde is not, will not bee *long intent* on them. Some things there are, which we are, and can be intent upon, and accordingly dwell long upon them, and therefore in *Iob* 17.11. *The thoughts* are called the *poſſeßions of the heart*, (ſo tis in the originall, and noted in the margin) ſuch thoughts as are pleaſing, the heart dwels on them; yea ſo intent are we often, that they hinder our ſleepe: as tis ſaid of wicked men, *They cannot ſleepe for multitude of thoughts*, *Eccleſ.* 5.12. *So, to deviſe froward things*, *Solomon* ſayes, *Prov.* 16.30. *That a man ſhuts his eyes*, that is, is exceeding attentive, poreth upon his plots; for ſo a man doth uſe to do, to ſhut his eyes when hee would be intent, and therefore it is ſo expreſſed. But now let the mind be occupied and buſied about good things, and things belonging to our peace, how unſteady is it? which things ſhould yet draw out the intention of the minde: For the more excellent the object is, the ſtronger our intention ſhould be. God is the moſt glorious object our mindes can faſten on, the moſt alluring. The thought of whom therefore ſhould ſwallow up all other, as not worthy to be ſeen the ſame day with him: But I appeale to all your experiences, if your thoughts of him be not moſt unſteady; and are, (that I may ſo compare it) as when we looke upon a Starre thorow an Optique glaſſe, held with a palſie ſhaking hand: It is long ere we can bring

our minds to have ken of him, to place our eyes upon him, and when we have, how do our hands ſhake, and ſo looſe ſight ever and anon? So whilſt we are in never ſo ſerious talke with him, when all things elſe ſhould ſtand without, and not dare to offer entrance, till wee have done with him, yet how many chinkes are there in the heart, at which other thoughts come in? and our minds leave God, and follow them, and *go after our covetouſneſſe*, our credit, &c. as the Prophets phraſe is, *Ezech.* 33. So when wee are hearing the Word, how doe our minds ever and anon run out of the Church, and come in againe, and ſo do not heare halfe that is ſaid? So when wee are at our callings, which God bids us to be converſant about with all our might, *Eccleſ.* 9. 10. yet our minds like idle truants, or negligent ſervants, though ſent about never ſo ſerious a buſineſſe, yet go out of the way to ſee any ſport, run after the Hares that croſſe the way, follow after Butter-flies that buzze about us.

And ſo when wee come to pray, Chriſt bids *watch to prayer*, *Mark.* 13. 33. that is, as if we were at every doore to place a guard that none come in and diſturbe and knock us off. But how oft doth the heart nod and fall aſleepe, and run into another world, as men in dreames do? Yea ſo naturall are diſtractions to us, when we are buſied about holy duties, that as excrements come from men, when very weake and ſick, ere they are aware of it; ſo do worldly thoughts from us,

and

and we are carried out of that ſtreame of good our mind was running in, into ſome by-creek ere we are aware of it.

Fourthly, the *vanity* of the mind appeares, in regard of *good* things, that if it doth thinke of them, yet it doth it *unſeaſonably*. It is with your thoughts as with your ſpeeches, their goodneſſe lies in their placing and order, *Prov.* 25. 11. *If fitly ſpoken*, they are *as Apples of Gold in pictures of Silver*. And as a man is to bring forth actions, ſo thoughts *in due ſeaſon*; and thoſe *fruits*, ſo theſe *buds* ſhould come out in *ſeaſon*, *Pſal.* 1. Now the vanity of the mind appeares in thinking of ſome good things, ſometimes unſeaſonably; when you are praying, you ſhould not onely have no worldly thoughts come in, but no other than praying thoughts. But then haply ſome notions of, or for a Sermon will come readily in: ſo in hearing, a man ſhall often have good thoughts that are heterogeneall to the thing in hand; So when a man is falling downe to prayer, looke what thing a man had forgotten, when it ſhould have beene thought of, will then come in, or what will affect a man much comes in to divert him: this *miſplacing* of *thoughts* (ſuppoſe they be good) is yet from a vanity of the mind; did thoſe thoughts come at another time, they ſhould bee welcome: wee find our mindes ready to ſpend thoughts about any thing, rather than what God at preſent calls unto. When we go to a Sermon, wee find we could then ſpend our thoughts more

willingly about reading, or happily ſearching our hearts; unto which at another time, when called to it, we ſhould be moſt unwilling to. We could bee content to run wild over the fields of meditations and miſcellanious thoughts, though about good rather than to be tied to that taske, and kept in one ſet path.

In *Adam* and Chriſt no thought was miſplaced, but though they were as *many* as the *Stars*, yet they marched in their *courſes*, and kept their ranks. But ours, as Meteors, dance up and down in us. And this *diſorder* is a *vanity* and *ſinne*, be the thought materially never ſo good. Not every one that hath the beſt part muſt therefore firſt ſtep up the Stage to act, but take his right cue. In Printing, let the letters be never ſo faire, yet if not placed in their order, and rightly compoſed, they marre the ſenſe. Souldiers upon no termes ſhould breake their ranks: ſo nor ſhould our thoughts, *Prov.* 16.3. There is a promiſe to a *Righteous man, that* (as ſome read it) *his thoughts ſhall be ordered.*

And ſo much for the firſt part, *The privative* ſinfulneſſe in our *thoughts*, in reſpect of *what is good.*

Now ſecondly I proceed to diſcover that *poſitive vanity*, which appeareth in our thoughts; in regard *of what is evill.* And here it is not to bee expected, nor indeede can it bee performed by any man, to reckon up the ſeverall particularities of all thoſe vaine thoughts

thoughts which run through mans heart; I will inſiſt onely on ſome more generall diſcoveries, to which particulars may bee reduced for a taſte of the reſt.

Firſt, the *vanity* of them diſcovers it ſelfe, in that which Chriſt calls, *Marke* 7. 22. ἀφροσύνη, *fooliſhneſſe*: that is, ſuch thoughts as mad men have, and fooles, which *fooliſhneſſe* is ſeene, both in that unſetled wantonneſſe and *unſtayedneſſe* of the minde in thinking, that like quick-ſilver it cannot fixe, but as *Solomon* ſayes, *Proverbs* 17. *verſe* 24. *A fooles eyes are in the ends of the earth*, are gariſh, and runne up and downe from one end of the earth to the other, ſhooting and ſtreaming, as thoſe Meteors you ſee ſometimes in the ayre. And though indeed the mind of man is nimble and able thus to runne from one end of the earth to another, (which is its ſtrength and excellency) yet GOD would not have this ſtrength and nimbleneſſe, and metall-ſpirit in curvetting and tumbling, , (as I may call it) but in ſteady directing all our thoughts ſtraight on to his glory, our owne ſalvation, and the good of others; hee gave it this nimbleneſſe to turne away from evill, and the firſt appearance of it. As wee are to walke in Gods wayes hee calls us to, ſo every thought, as well as every action, is a ſtep: and therefore ought to bee ſteady, *Make ſtraight ſteps to your feet*, ſayes the Apoſtle, *Hebr.* 12. 13. turning

not to the right hand nor to the left, untill wee come to the journeys end of that buſineſſe wee are to thinke of. But our thoughts at beſt, are as wanton Spaniels, who though indeed they goe with, and accompany their Maſter, and come to their journeys end with him in the end, yet doe runne after every Bird, and wildly purſue every flock of ſheepe they ſee. This unſteadineſſe, it ariſeth from the like curſe on the minde of *Man*, as was on *Cain*, that it being *driven from the preſence of the Lord*, it proves a vagabond, *and ſo mens eyes are in the ends of the earth.*

This fooliſhneſſe or ἀφροσύνη is alſo ſeene in that *Independence* in our thoughts; they hanging oft together as ropes of ſand; this we ſee more evidently in dreames: And not onely then, but when awake alſo, and *that*, when we would ſet our ſelves to bee moſt ſerious, how doe our thoughts jangle and ring back-ward? and as wanton Boyes, when they take pens in their hands, ſcribble broken words that have no dependence. Thus doe our thoughts: and if you would but looke over the copies thereof, which you write continually, you would finde as much nonſenſe in your thoughts, as you find in mad mens ſpeeches. This madneſſe and diſtemper is in the minde ſince the fall (though it appeares not in our words, becauſe wee are wiſer) that if notes were taken of our thoughts, wee ſhould find thoughts ſo vagrant, that we know not how they come in, nor whence they came, nor whither

ther they would. But as *God* doth *all things* in *weight*, *number*, and *meaſure*, ſo doth his Image in us, ſo farre as it is renewed. And, by reaſon of theſe two, the *folly*, *unſetledneſſe* and *independance* of our thoughts, wee bring our thoughts often to no iſſue, to no perfection, but wilder away our time *in thinking* (as you uſe to ſay) *of nothing*, and as *Seneca* ſayes of mens *lives*, as of Ships that are toſt up and downe at Sea, it may be ſaid they have beene *toſſed much*, but *ſayled* nothing. The like in this reſpect may bee ſaid of the thoughts, or as when men make imperfect daſhes, and write nonſenſe, *They are ſaid to ſcribble, they doe not write*: So, in theſe follies and independencies, wee wilder and *loſe our ſelves, we doe not thinke*.

But 2. on the contrary if any *ſtrong luſt*, or violent paſſion be up, then our thoughts are *too fixed* and *intent*, and run in ſo farre into ſuch ſinfull objects, that they cannot be puld out againe, or any way diverted or taken off: which is another vanity. For our thoughts and our underſtanding part was ordained to moderate, allay, and coole, and take off our paſſions, when they are a playing over, to rule and governe them. But now our thoughts are themſelves ſubjected to our affections, and like fuell put under them, do but make them boile the more. And although our thoughts doe firſt ſtir up our feares, joyes, deſires, &c. yet theſe being ſtirred up once, chaine, and fixe, and hold our thoughts to thoſe objects,

objects, ſo as wee cannot looſen them againe. Therefore ſayes Chriſt to his Diſciples, *Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts ariſe in your hearts?* For perturbations in the affections cauſe thoughts like fumes and vapours to aſcend. Thus if a *paſſion of feare* be up, how doth it conjure up multitude of ghoſtly thoughts which we cannot conjure downe againe, nor hide our eyes from: but which haunt us, and follow us up and down, where-ever we goe, ſo as a man runs away purſued by his owne thoughts, *the heart then meditates on terror*: As *Iſay* 33.18. So when ſorrow is up, how doth it make us ſtudy the croſſe that lights upon us? which to forget, would bee an eaſe unto the mind. But a mans paſſions make his thoughts to con it, and to ſay it by heart, over and over againe, as if it would not have us forget it. So when *love* and *deſire* is up, bee the thing what it will, we are taken with, as preferment, credit, beauty, riches, it ſets our thoughts aworke to view the thing all over, from top to toe (as we ſay) to obſerve every part and circumſtance, that doth make it amiable unto us: as if a picture were to bee drawne of it. So when *joy* is up, we view the thing we rejoyce in, and read it over and over, as we doe a Booke we like, and we marke every tittle, we are punctuall in it; yea ſo inordinate are wee herein, as often we cannot ſleep for thinking on them. *Eccleſ.* 5.12. *Abundance of riches will not ſuffer him to ſleepe, for the multitude of thoughts in his head*, ſpeaking of a man

man who is covetous: how doe thoughts trouble the *Belſhazzers* and *Nebuchadonezers* of the world? *Dan.* 4. 19. ſo *Prov.* 4. 16. *They ſleep not unleſſe they have done miſchiefe*, if their deſires remaine unſatisfied, they doe diſturbe their thoughts, like froward children by their crying: ſo as, often, *theſe* which men count *free* (as the moſt doe *thoughts*) doe prove the greateſt bondage and torment in the earth unto them, and do hinder ſleep, the nurſe of nature, eate out, and live upon the heart that bred them, weary the ſpirits, that when a man *ſhall ſay* (as *Iob* 7. 13.) *My bed ſhall comfort me*, by putting a parentheſis to his thoughts, and ſad diſcourſes, which he hath when awake, yet then they haunt a man; and as *verſe* 14. *terrifie him.* A man cannot lay them aſide as he doth his cloake: and when men die they will follow them to hell, and torment them to hell, and torment them worſe there; your thoughts are one of the greateſt executioners there, even the *Worme that dies not.*

Thirdly, the *vanity* of the minde appeares in *curioſity* a longing and itching to be fed with, and to know (and then delighting to think of) things that doe not at all concerne us. Take an experiment of this in Schollers (whoſe chiefe worke lyes in this ſhop) how many precious thoughts are ſpent this way? as in curioſity of knowledge, as appeares by thoſe the Apoſtle often rebukes, that affect, as 1 *Tim.* 6. 4, 20. *oppoſitions of ſcience falſely ſo called* curioſities of knowledge *of*

things they have not ſeene. So *Col.* 2. and 1 *Tim.* 4. 7. hee calls ſuch iſſues of mens braines, they dote on *old wives fables*; becauſe as fables pleaſe old wives, ſo doe theſe their minds, and of that itch they have in thē, evē as women with child, in their longings, content not themſelves with what the place affords, or the ſeaſon, with what may be had; but often long after ſome unheard of rarity, far fetcht, or, it may be, not at all to be had: Thus men not contenting themſelves with the wonders of God diſcovered in the depth of his Word and Works, they will launch into another Sea, and world of their own making, and there they ſayle with pleaſure, as many of the Schoole-men did in ſome of their ſpeculations, ſpending their precious wits in framing curious webs out of their owne bowels.

Take another inſtance alſo in others, who have leaſure and parts to read much, they ſhould ballaſt their hearts with the Word, and take in thoſe more precious words of wiſdome and ſound knowledge to profit themſelves and others, and to build up their owne ſoules, and whereby they may bee enabled to ſerve their Countrey: but now what doe their curious fancies carry them untō, to be verſed in but Playbookes, jearing Paſquils, Romanſes, fained ſtaies, which are the curious needle-work of idle braines, ſo as they load their heads with *Apes and Peacocks feathers*, in ſtead of pearles and precious

cious ſtones; ſo as a man may ſay as *Solomon*, *Prov.* 15. 14. *The heart of him that hath underſtanding ſeeketh knowledge, but the mouth of fooles feeds on fooliſhneſſe.* Fooliſh diſcourſes pleaſe their eares and eyes to reade: all theſe being but purveiors (as it were) for food, for the thoughts, like Camelions men live on ayre and winde.

To leave them, how doe others out of meere curioſity to know and pleaſe their thoughts, liſten after all the newes that flies up and downe the world; ſcum all the froth that floats in fooliſh mens mouths, and pleaſe themſelves onely with talking, thinking, and hearing of it.

I doe not condemne all herein: ſome their ends are good, and they can make uſe of it, and doe as *Nehemiah* did, who inquired how things went at *Ieruſalem*, to rejoyce with Gods people, and mourne with them, and pray for them, and to know how to faſhion their prayers accordingly. But I condemne that curious itch that is in men, when it is done, but meerely to pleaſe their fancies, which is much delighted with new things, though they concerne us not; ſuch the Athenians were, *Acts* 17. 21. How doe ſome men long all the weeke, till they heare events and iſſues, and make it a great part of the happineſſe of their lives, to ſtudy the ſtate more than their owne hearts, and affaires of their callings: who take actions of ſtate as their text to ſtudy the meaning of, & to preach on where-ever they come. I ſpeake of thoſe that yet lay not to heart

the miſeries of the Church of Chriſt, nor helpe them with their prayers, if at any time they happen.

The like curioſity is ſeene in many, in deſiring to know the ſecrets of other men, which yet would doe them no good to know, and who doe ſtudy mens actions and ends, not to reforme, or doe good to them, but to know them, and think and muſe thereof, when alone, with pleaſure; this is curioſity, and properly a vanity of the thinking-power, which it mainly pleaſeth; and is indeed a great ſinne, when much of mens moſt pleaſing thoughts are ſpent on things concerne them not. For the things we ought to know, and which doe concerne us, are enough to take up all our thoughts alone, neither ſhall we have any to ſpare: and thoughts are precious things, the immediate fruits and budds of an immortall nature, and God hath given us power to coyne them, to lay them out in things concerne our owne good, and of our neighbours, and his owne glory: and thus not to ſpend them is the greateſt waſte in the world; examine what Corne you put in to grinde, for God ought to have toll of all. *Prov.* 24. 8. *He that deviſeth evill ſhall be called a miſchievous perſon*, not alwayes he that doth a miſchievous action, but that deviſeth it: and *verſe* 9. he aggravates it, *à minori*, *for every thought is ſinne*, then a combination and conſpiracy of wicked thoughts is much more.

But 4. there is a worſe *vanity* than this, and that

that is that intimated *Rom.*13.*ult.Taking thought to fulfill the lusts of the flesh*, προνοιαν ποιεῖσθαι [*To make projects for it.*] For thoughts are the Caterers for our lusts, and lay in all their provision, they are they that looke out where the best markets are, the best opportunities for sinning in any kinde, the best bargaines for credit, for preferment, for riches, &c. For example, would a man rise? his thoughts study the art of it, men frame their own ladder to climbe withall, invent wayes how to doe it, though often it proves as to *Haman*, their own Gallows. Would they be rich? what doe they study? even all cheats and tricks on the Cards, (as I may so speake) that is, all the cunning tricks of the world, all the wayes of oppressing, defrauding, and going beyond their brethren, so to pack things in all their dealings, that they themselves shall be the winners, and those that deale with them, the losers. *Isa.*32.7. it is said *that the Instruments of the churlish are evill, and he deviseth wicked devices to destroy the poore:* would a man undermine his opposite, as one that stands in his light, and who hinders his credit? hee'll digge and fall a pioning, with his thoughts, his engines, in the night, digge a pit, as the *Scripture phase is*, and digge deep to hide his counsell, to blow him up in the end, and so as he shall not know who hurt him; and this is worse than all the former, this studied artificiall villany. The more devising there is in sinne, the worse: therefore the fact about *Vriah*, not so much

much that of *Bathſheba*, is objected againſt *David*, becauſe he uſed art in it; he *tooke thought for it*, but in the matter of *Bathſheba*, *thoughts tooke him.*

Fifthly, the fifth is the *repreſenting* or acting *over ſinnes*, in our thoughts and imaginations, perſonating thoſe pleaſures by imagination, which at preſent we enjoy not really, faining and imagining our ſelves to act thoſe ſinfull practiſes we have not opportunity outwardly to perform: *ſpeculative wickedneſſe* Divines doe call it, which to bee in the power of imagination to doe, is evident to you by your dreames; when fancie playes its part moſt, and to allude to what the Prophet ſayes, makes us beleeve *we eate when we are an hungry, to drinke when our ſoules are thirſty*, *Iſay* 29. 8. But I meane not to ſpeake of the power and corruption of it, as in our dreames: it were well if, as the Apoſtle ſpeakes of *Drunkenneſſe*, that this ſpeculative wickedneſſe were onely *in the night*. But corrupt and diſtempered affections doe caſt men into ſuch dreames in the day, and when they are awake, there are then (to borrow the Apoſtles expreſſion) *filthy dreames*, Jude 8. *that defile the fleſh*, even when awake: when, their luſts wanting worke, their fancie erects to them a ſtage, and they ſet their imaginations and thoughts aworke to entertaine their filthy and impure deſires, with ſhews and playes of their owne making, and ſo *reaſon* and the intention of their minds, ſit as ſpectators all the while

while to view with pleaſure, till their thoughts inwardly act over their owne uncleane deſires, ambitious projects, or what ever elſe they have a minde unto.

So *vaine* and empty is the heart of man become, ſo *impatient* are our deſires and luſts of interruption in their pleaſures, ſo ſinful & corrupt.

Firſt, vaine and empty it appeares to be in this; for take all the pleaſures of ſin, when they are never ſo fully, ſolidly, really, and ſubſtantially enjoyed, they are but ſhadowes, a meere outſide and figure, as the Apoſtle calls the world. It is opinion of imagination that caſts that varniſh of goodneſſe on them, which is not truly in them. So *Felix* and *Bernices* pompe is termed πολυφαντασία; but now this ſpeculative enjoying of them onely in imagination, (which many mens hearts take ſo much pleaſure in,) the pleaſing our ſelves in the bare thoughts and imaginations of them, this is but a ſhadow of theſe ſhadows, that the ſoule ſhould *Ixion*-like embrace and commit adultery with clouds onely; this is a *vanity* beyond all other vanities, that maketh us vainer than other creatures, who, though *ſubject to vanity*, yet not to ſuch as this.

Secondly, it argues our deſires to be impatient, to be detained from, or interrupted of their pleaſures. When the ſoule ſhall bee found ſo greedy, that when the heart is debarred or ſequeſtred from thoſe things it deſires, and wants meanes or opportunities to act its luſts, as not being

being to ſtay, it will at leaſt enjoy them in imagination, and in the *interim*, ſet fancy to entertain the minde with emptie pictures of them drawne in its owne thoughts.

3. Thus they appeare alſo to bee exceeding ſinfull and corrupt; an *outward* act of ſinne, it is but as an act of *whoredom* with the creature, whē *really* enjoyed: But this is *Inceſt*, when we defile our ſoules and ſpirits with theſe imaginations and likneſſes which are begotten in our owne fancies, being the children of our owne hearts.

And yet (my brethren) ſuch ſpeculative enjoying of pleaſures, and acting over of ſinnes, the minde of man is full of, as will appeare in many particulars.

Firſt, look what comforts men have *at preſent* in their poſſeſſion, and at command, what *excellencies* or endowments, men love to bee alone to ſtudy and thinke of them; and when they are ſequeſtred from the preſent uſe of them, yet they will then be againe and againe recounting and of caſting them up, taking a ſurvey of their happineſſe in them, applauding their owne hearts in their conditions. And as rich men, that love money, love to be looking on it, and telling it over; ſo doe men to be ſumming up their comforts and priviledges they enjoy, which others want; as, how rich they are, how great, how they excell others in parts and gifts, &c. Oh how much of that precious ſand of our thoughts runne out this way! Thus hee in the Goſpell, he keeps an audit

dit in his heart; *Soule* (ſaith he) *thou haſt goods laid up for many yeares.* So *Haman*, *Eſter* 5. 11. takes an Inventory of his honours and goods; he talkes *of all the glory of his riches, and all the things wherein the King had promoted him.* So *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Dan.* 4. 30. as it may ſeeme, he was alone walking and talking to himſelfe, like a foole, ſaying to himſelfe; *Is not this the great* Babel *which I have built by the might of my power, for the glory of my Majeſty?*

And as thus upon their comforts, ſo alſo upon their excellencies, as their learning, wiſdome, parts, &c. Men love to ſtand looking upon theſe in the glaſſe of their owne ſpeculation, as faire faces love to looke often and long in Looking-glaſſes, which, as it ariſeth from that ſelf-flattery is in men; ſo alſo that they might keepe their happineſſe ſtill freſh and continued in their eye; which thoughts, when they raiſe not up the heart to thankfulneſſe to God, and are not uſed to that end, but are bellowes of pride; they are vaine and abominable in the *eyes* of God, as appeares by GODS dealing with thoſe fore-mentioned; for to the one he ſayes, *Thou foole, this night*; the other *whilſt the word was in his mouth*, (giving him no longer warning) he ſtrikes with madneſſe and bruitiſhneſſe: and *Haman*, you know, was like a *Wall* that doth *ſwell* before it *breakes*, and falls to ruine and decay.

Secondly, *this ſpeculative* enjoying of plea-

ſures, and acting over ſinnes thus in fancy, doth appeare in regard *of things to come*; which when we have in view, or any hopes of mens thoughts goe forth afore to meet them, with how much contentment do mens thoughts entertaine their deſires, with vaine promiſings and expectations aforehand of their pleaſures, that are in view and in poſſibility to bee enjoyed. So they in *Eſay* wind up their hearts to a higher pin of jollity in the midſt of their cups, in that their hearts thought and promiſed them, *To morrow ſhall bee as to day, and much more abundant*, *Iſay* 56.12. So they *Iames* 4.13. they ſay with themſelves, *Wee will goe to ſuch a City, and continue there a yeere, and get guine.* And the promiſe of this, and the thoughts of it aforehand feeds them, and keepes up their hearts in comfort. When men riſe in a morning, they begin to forethinke with much pleaſure, what carnall pleaſures they have the advonſion and promiſe of that day or weeke, as to goe to ſuch companie, and there be merrie; to goe ſuch a pleaſant journey, enjoy ſatisfaction in ſuch a luſt, heare ſuch newes, &c. And thus as godly men *live by faith* in Gods promiſes, *Hab.* 2.4. *Iſay* 38.16. *By theſe men live and this is the ſpirit of my life*, ſaith *Hezechiah*, even *what God hath ſpoken verſe*, 15. So do carnall men live much upon the promiſes of their owne hearts and thoughts aforehand (for to this head of vaine thoughts, theſe *vaine promiſings* are to bee reduced, *Pſalm.* 49.11. *Their inward thought is, their*

their houſes ſhall continue for ever, & this thought pleaſeth them: what pleaſure almoſt is there, which a man makes much account of, but hee acts it firſt over in private in his owne thoughts? and thus doe men fooliſhly take their owne words and promiſes, and ſo *befoole themſelves in the end*, as *Ieremy* ſpeakes, *Ier.* 17. They take up before-hand in their thoughts upon truſt, the pleaſures they are to enjoy, even as ſpend-thrifts doe their rents, or Heires their revenewes before they come of age to enjoy their lands, that when they come indeed to enjoy the pleaſures they expected, either they prove but *dreames*, as *Iſay* 29. 6. they finde their *ſoules empty*, or ſo much under their expectation, and ſo ſtale, as they have little in them, that there ſtill proves more in the imagination than in the thing, which ariſeth from the vaſtneſſe and greedineſſe of mens deſires, as the cauſe hereof; for that makes them ſwallow up all at once. So *Hab.* 2. *Enlarging his deſires as Hell, hee heapes up all Nations, ſwallowes them up in his thoughts.* So an ambitious Scholler doth all preferments that are in his view.

Thirdly, this *ſpeculative wickedneſſe* is exerciſed in like maner towards *things paſt*, in recalling namely, and reviving in our thoughts the pleaſure of ſinfull actions paſſed; when the minde runnes over the paſſages and circumſtances of the ſame ſinnes long ſince committed, with a new and freſh delight; when men raiſe up their

dead actions long ſince buried, in the ſame likeneſſe they were tranſacted in, and parley with them, as the Witch and *Saul* did with Satan in *Samuels* likeneſſe. And whereas they ſhould draw croſſe lines over them, and blot them out through faith in Chriſts blood, they rather copy and write them over againe in their thoughts, with the ſame contentment. So an uncleane perſon can ſtudy and view over every circumſtance paſſed in ſuch an act, with ſuch a perſon committed; ſo a vaine-glorious Scholer doth repeate in his thoughts an eminent performance of his, and all ſuch paſſages therein as were moſt elegant. And thus men chew the cudd upon any ſpeech of commendation uttered by others of them. And all this even as a good heart doth repeat good things heard or read, with the remembrance alſo of what quickneſſe they had in ſuch and ſuch paſſages, and with what affections they were warmed, when they heard them; or as a godly man recals with comfort the actions of a well-paſt life, as *Hezechiah* did, *Lord I have walked before thee with a perfect heart*, and thereby do alſo ſtir and provoke their hearts to the like temper againe: So on the contrary do wicked men uſe to recall, and revive the pleaſingeſt ſinfull paſſages in their lives, to ſucke a new ſweetneſſe out of them. Than which nothing argues more *hardneſſe* and *wickedneſſe* of heart, or provokes God more. For

First,

First, it argues much *wickednesse* of heart, and such as when it is ordinary with the heart to do thus, is not compatible with grace: for in the 6. of the *Romans*, *ver.* 21. the Apostle shewes that a good heart useth to reape no such fruit of sinfull actions past, *But what fruit had you of those things whereof yee are now ashamed?* The Saints reape and distill nothing out of all those flowers, but shame and sorrow, and sad sighs: when *Ephraim* remembred his sin, he was *ashamed, and repented*; and canst thou in thy thoughts, reap a new harvest and crop of pleasure out of them, againe and againe?

Secondly, it argues much hardnesse of heart; nothing being more opposite to the truth and practise of repentance, the foundation of which is to call to mind the sin with shame and sorrow, and to recall it with much more griefe, than ever there was pleasure in the committing of it: and whose property is to *hate* the *appearance* of it, and to enflame the heart with *Zeale* and revenge against it. And thereby it provoketh God exceedingly, our hearts are thereby embrued in a new guilt, wee thereby stand to, and make good our former act: even so, by remembring it with pleasure, wee provoke God to remember it with a new detestation of it, and so to send downe new plagues; who, if we recall it with griefe, *would remember it no more*: wee shew wee take delight to rake in those wounds wee have given CHRIST alreadie;

to view *the ſinnes of others* with pleaſure, *Rom.* 1. *ult.* is made more *than to commit them:* But much more to view and revive our owne with a freſh delight: and therefore know that how-ever you may take delight here to repeat to your ſelves your old ſins, yet that in Hell nothing will gall you more, than the remembrance of them; every circumſtance in every ſinne will then be as a dagger at thy heart. This was the rich mans taske and ſtudy in Hell, to *remember the good things he had received*, and his ſins committed in the abuſe of them. And if godly men here bee made to *poſſeſſe the ſins of their youth with horror*, as *Iob*, *and to have them ever afore them*, as *David*, how will wicked men be continually affrighted with them in hell? whoſe puniſhment is in a great part ſet forth to us, by this *Pſalm.* 50. 20. *I will ſet them in order before thee.*

Fourthly, the fourth thing wherein this *ſpeculative vanity* appeares, is in acting ſinnes upon meere imaginary ſuppoſitions men faigne, and contrive to themſelves, and make a ſuppoſition to themſelves in their owne thoughts, firſt of what *they would be*, and *then* what *they would doe.* Men create fooles paradiſes to themſelves, and then walke up and downe in them; as, if they had money enough, what pleaſures they would have; if they were in ſuch places of preferment, how they would carry themſelves. To allude to that *Abſalom* ſaid, 2 *Sam.* 15. 4. *Oh if I were a Iudge in the Land, I would do this or that, &c.* doing

ing this with a great deale of pleasure, almost as much as those that really enjoy them. This may well be the meaning of that *Psalme* 50.18. where of the hypocrite (who outwardly abstaines from grosse sinnes) 'tis said, that *he consenteth with the thiefe, and partaketh with the adulterer*, namely, in his *heart* and *fancy*, supposing himselfe with them, and so desires to be doing what they doe. Thus take one who is naturally ambitious (who both nature, parts, and education have all made, but a *Bramble*, *never to rule over the trees*, and hath fixt in a lower sphere, as uncapable of rising higher, or being greater, as the earth is of becomming a Starre Heaven, yet) hee will take upon him in his owne heart, faining and supposing himselfe to bee, and then act the part of a great man there, erect a throne, and sit downe in it; and thinkes with himselfe what hee would doe, if a King or a great Man, &c. So take a man that is uncleane, but now growne old, and a *drie tree*, and so cannot act his lust as formerly, yet his thoughts shall supply what is wanting in his strength or oppotunity. And hee makes his own heart both Bawd, Brothel-house, Whore, Whoremonger, & all: so a man that is naturally voluptuous, loves pleasures, but wants meanes to purchase them, yet his inclinations will please themselves with the thoughts of what mixture and composition of delights he would have; hee will set downe with himselfe his bill of fare, how he would have, if he might wish, his cup of

pleasure

pleasure mingled, what ingredients put into it. So a man that is revengefull, and yet wants a sting, yet he pleaseth himselfe with revengefull thoughts and wishes, and will bee making invectives and rayling dialogues against him, hee hates, when he is not by. A man in love, in his fancy he will court his Paramour though absent, hee will by his imagination make her present, and so frame solemne set speeches to her.

In a word, let mens inclinations and dispositions bee of what kinde so ever, and let the impossibilities and improbabilities bee never so great of being what they desire; yet in their fancies and thoughts they will discover themselves what they would be. *Totumque quod esse desiderant, sibi apud semetipsos cogitationibus depingunt*, men will be drawing Maps of their desires, calculate their owne inclinations, cut out a condition of life which fills their hearts, and they please themselves withall; and there is no surer way to know a mans naturall inclination, than by this.

First, which yet first is as great a folly as any other, imitating children herein; for is it not childish to make clay pies, and puppets? what else are such fancies as these? and to be as children acting the parts of Ladies and Mistresses, and yet such *childishnesse* is in mens hearts.

2. And secondly, a *vanity* also, because a man sets his heart on *what is not*: the things themselves are not, if a man had them, *Prov.* 23.5. but

to

to pleaſe themſelves with ſuppoſitions is much worſe.

Thirdly, this argues the greateſt incontentation of minde that may bee, when men will in their own thoughts put themſelves into another condition than God ever ordained for them.

Vſe 1.

HAving diſcovered the vanity of your thoughts and your eſtates thereby, be humbled for them; This I ground upon, *Proverbs* 30. 32. where *Agur* teacheth us to humble our ſelves as well for thoughts as actions. *If thou haſt done fooliſhly in lifting up thy ſelfe, or if thou haſt thought evill, lay thine hand upon thy mouth.* Now as *ſmiting upon the thigh* is put for repentance and ſhame and ſorrow in *Ephraim, Ierem.* 31. 19. ſo is *laying the hand* upon the mouth put for greater and deeper humiliation, as arguing full conviction of ones guilt, *Romans* 3. 19. *Every mouth muſt be ſtopped*; Having nothing to ſay, not to plead and excuſe that thoughts are free, and it is impoſſible to bee rid of them, &c. but as *Ezechiel* 16. 65. *To remember, and to bee confounded, and never to open thy mouth more! to be vile, and not to anſwer againe*: as *Iob* ~~39. 27, 28~~ 40. 3. 4. this is to lay thy hand on thy mouth, that is, to humble thy ſelfe.

And indeed there is much cauſe, for your

thoughts they are the first begotten, and eldest sonnes of originall sinne, and therefore *the strength of it*, as *Iacob* called *Reuben* the first-borne; yea also, and the *Parents* and begetters of all other sins, their *brethren*; The first plotters and contrivers, and *Achitophels*, in all the treasons and rebellions of our hearts and lives; the bellowes and incendiaries of all inordinate affections; the Panders to all our lusts, that *take thought* to provide for the satisfying of them; the disturbers in all good duties, that interrupt and spoile and fly-blow all our prayers, that they stinke in the nostrils of God.

And if their hainousnesse will nothing move you, consider their number, for they are continually thus: which makes our sinnes to bee in number more than the sands: the thoughts of *Solomons* heart were as the Sand, and so ours; not a minute, but as many thoughts passe from us, as in a minute sands doe in an Houre-glasse. So that suppose, that taken severally, they bee the smallest and least of your sinnes, yet their *multitude* makes them more and heavier than all your other. Nothing smaller than a graine of *Sand*, but if there be a heape of them, there is nothing *heavier*, *Iob* 6. 3. *My griefe is heavier than the Sand*. Suppose they bee in themselves, but as Farthing-tokens, in comparison of grosse defilements: yet because the mint never lies still, sleeping nor waking, therefore they make up the greatest part of that treasure of wrath which we

are

are a laying up: and know that God will reckon every Farthing, and in thy puniſhment bate thee not one vaine thought. And that God lookes upon our thoughts thus, ſee but the inditement he brings in againſt the old world, which ſtands ſtill upon record, *Geneſ.6.* when he pronounced that heavie judgement of deſtroying the old world, doth he alledge their murthers, adulteries, and groſſe defilements chiefly as the cauſe? Their *thoughts* rather; which becauſe ſo many, and ſo *continually evill*, provoked him more than all their other ſins. Goe down therefore into thy heart, and conſider them well, to humble thee, to make thee vile, and if in one roome ſuch a treaſure of wickedneſſe be found laid up, what in all thoſe other *Chambers of the belly*, as *Solomon* cals them? conſider them to humble thee, but not for all this their multitude to diſcourage thee. For God hath *more thoughts of mercy* in him, than thou haſt had of rebellion, *Pſal.*40.5. *Thy thoughts to us-ward*, (ſpeaking of thoughts of mercy) *are more than can be numbred.* Thou begannеſt but as yeſterday to thinke thoughts of rebellion againſt him, but his thoughts of mercy have been *from everlaſting*, and reach to *everlaſting*: and therefore in *Eſay* 55.*v.*7. having made mention of *our thoughts*, *Let the unrighteous man forſake his thoughts, and hee will have mercy on him*; becauſe this objection of the multitude might come in to diſcourage men from hopes of mercy, therefore purpoſely hee

addes, *he will multiply to pardon*; and to assure us that he hath thoughts of mercy to out-vye ours of sin, he addes, *for my thoughts* exceed yours, as *Heaven doth the earth.*

Vse 2.

LEt us make for ever conscience of them, so *Iob* did, *Iob* 31. 1. I made a covenant with mine eyes, why should I thinke upon a Maide? *Solomon* gives in especiall charge; *above all keeping*, keepe thy heart, *Prov.* 4.23.

First, thou art to keepe the Lords day holy, thy *selfe unspotted of the World. To keepe thy brother, to keepe all the commandements, but above all to keep thy heart*, and in it *thy thoughts*; for this is the *Great Commandement*, because it extends it selfe (as the foundation) unto them all: for as in the same Commandement where murther is forbidden, a malicious thought is also, and so of the rest; So in keeping the thoughts, thou virtually keepest all the Commandements: as original sinne is said to be forbidden in all the Commandements, so are thy thoughts taken order for in all.

Secondly, out of it are issues of life; thoughts and affections are the spring, speeches and actions the streame: as are our thoughts, so are our

our affections; for theſe are the bellowes; ſo alſo our prayers; ſo all; for they are in the ſoule as the ſpirits in the body, they runne through all, move all, act all.

Thirdly; if you looke to God, our thoughts are that ſpot of ground, which hee proclaimes himſelfe ſole Lord of, and makes it one of his greateſt titles, that he *knowes them*, and *judgeth them*. Kings attempt to rule your tongues, to binde your hands, and rule your actions; but God onely your thoughts. By them we chiefly ſanctifie him in our hearts, by them wee walke with God, and ſhall we not make conſcience of them?

Fourthly, if you looke to the worke and *power of grace*, wherein lies it, but in *bringing every thought into obedience?* 2 *Corin.* 10. 5. This is the glory of our religion above all other in the World: wherein lies the difficultie of it, the ſtrictneſſe of it? what makes it ſo hard a taske? but the obſerving and keeping the thoughts in bounds: wherein lies the difference betweene ſincere hearted Chriſtians and others? but the keeping of our thoughts, without which all Religion is but *bodilie exerciſe*. Papiſts may mumble over their prayers, hypocrites talke, but this is *Godlineſſe*.

Fifthly, if we looke to things wee have a care of; if wee have a care of ſpeeches, becauſe Chriſt *hath ſaid, wee ſhall anſwer for every idle*

word; why not alſo for the ſame reaſon, ſhould we have a care of thoughts? which are the *words of the mind*, only they want a ſhape, to be audible to others, which the tongue gives them, for which you muſt anſwer as wel as for words *Heb.* 4. 12. 1 *Cor.* 4. 5. If you be carefull what companions you have, and whom you lodge in your houſes, and who lye in your boſomes, then much more of your thoughts, which *lodge* in your hearts, which are not yours, but Gods houſes; built for himſelf, and for Chriſt and *his Word to dwell in:* ſeeing alſo the things you think of have the moſt neare intimate fellowſhip and converſe with you. And therefore when you thinke of the Word, it is ſaid to *talke with you*, *Prov.* 6. If you be carefull of what you eate, becauſe ſuch blood you have, &c. then be carefull what you thinke, thoughts being *Pabulũ animæ*, as *Tully* cals them. *Thy words did* [*I eate*] ſays *Ieremiah*, ſpeaking of meditating on it.

Sixthly, if you look to the iſſue of things: what ſhall bee the ſubject of that great inqueſt at the Day of Judgement? the *thoughts and counſels*, 1 *Cor.* 4. 5. And after the Day of Judgment, mens thoughts ſhall prove their greateſt executioners: what are the cords God laſhes you with to all eternity, your own thoughts; *thoughts accuſing*, wherby you ſtudy over every ſin; and every one wil be as a dagger, *Iſay* 33. 18. the *Hypocrites* torment is to *meditate terrors*, to ſtudy Gods wrath, and the Saints bleſſedneſs, and their own ſins and miſery.

Reme-

Remedies againſt vaine Thoughts.

THe firſt is to get the heart furniſhed and enriched with a good ſtocke of ſanctified and heavenly knowledge in ſpirituall and heavenly truths: *For a good man* (ſaith Chriſt) *hath a good treaſure* in his *Heart*, *Mat.* 12. 35. that is, hee hath all graces, ſo many precious truths which are as gold in the Ore, which his thoughts, as the Mint, doth coyne and beat out, and which words bring forth. *A good man, out of the good treaſure of his heart, brings forth good things.* If therefore there be not Mines of precious truths hid in the heart, no wonder if our thoughts coyne nothing but droſſe, frothy vaine thoughts, for want of better materials, which ſhould feed the Mint, are wanting. Therefore *Solomon* ſaith, *Wicked men forge*, mint, or hammer *wickedneſs*, *Prov.* 6. 14. ſo *Junius* reads it: or if men have ſtore of naturall knowledge, and want ſpirituall uſefull knowledge to themſelves; although in company with others, they may bring forth good things in ſpeeches, yet when alone, their thoughts run not on them. For this, take a place of Scripture, *Deut.* 6. 6, 7. which ſhewes, that laying up the Word in the heart, and being much converſant in it, and getting knowledge out of it, is an effectuall meanes to keep our thoughts well exerciſed when we are alone: for the end why theſe words are commanded

manded *to be laid up in the heart, verſ.* 5, 6. is, as to teach them to others, ſo, to take up our thoughts when we are moſt retired, and alone, and when a man can doe nothing, but barely exerciſe his mind, in thinking; for when a man is a *riding*, or *walking*, or *lying downe*, and riſing up, (which are often and uſually our moſt retired times for thoughts, and are wholly ſpent in them, for many ride alone, and lye alone, &c.) yet then, ſaith he, thou ſhalt *talke of the Word:* which command he that is alone cannot do, therefore the *talking* there meant is not onely λόγος προφορικὸς, *outward conference* with others, (though intended) as to talke to thy bedfellow of it, and to thy companion: but ſuppoſe thou haſt none, then to *talke of it* to thy ſelfe, for thoughts are λόγοι ἐνδιάθετοι, *talking of the minde*; and ſo, comparing *Prov.* 6. 22. with this place (which wil fitly interpret it) it appeares; for *Solomon* exhorting to the ſame duty of *Binding the Word to the heart*, uſeth this motive, which is the fruit thereof, *That when thou awakeſt, it ſhall talke with thee*, that is, by thy thinking of it, it will talke with thee when thou and it art alone: So as thou ſhalt not need a better companion, it will be putting in and ſuggeſting ſome thing.

Secondly, endeavour to preſerve and keep up lively, holy, and ſpirituall affections in thy heart, and ſuffer them not to coole; *Fall not from thy firſt love*, nor feare, nor joy in God; or if thou haſt growne remiſs, endeavour to recover thoſe affections

ctions again. For such as your affections are, such necessarily must your thoughts be: and they enclineth the mind to think of such or such objects as will please them, rather than others; therefore says *David*, *Psal.* 119. 97. *How do I love thy Law! it is my Meditation day and night.* It was his love to it made him thinke of it so frequently. So *Malachy* 3. 16. *Those that feared the Lord, and thought upon his name*, are joyned: For what we feare we often think of, and also speak of often; therefore it is added; *They spake of one to another*; feare made them *thinke much of his name*, and thinking of it made *them speak of it*: such affection, such thoughts, and such speeches, as they both are. And indeed thoughts and affections are *sibi mutuo causæ*, the mutuall causes of each other: *Whilst I mused, the fire burned, Psal.* 39. so that thoughts are the bellows that kindle and inflame affections: and then if they are inflamed, they cause thoughts to boyle: therefore men newly converted to God, having new and strong affections, can with more pleasure think of God *than any*.

Thirdly, of all apprehensions else, get thy heart possessed with deep, strong and powerfull apprehensions and impressions of *Gods Holinesse, Majesty, Omnipresence, and Omniscience*. If any thoughts be of power to settle, fixe, and draw in the minde of man, they are the *thoughts of him*. What is the reason that the Saints and Angels in Heaven have not a vaine thought to eternity, not

a wry stroke, his presence fixeth them, their eye is never off him: Take a wanton garish loose spirit, let him be but in the presence of a Superiour whom he feares and reverenceth, and it consolidates him. *Iob* made therefore conscience of his thoughts, that he durst not look awry, *Iob* 31. 1, 2. because God *sees it*, saith he. This drew in and fastned *Davids* thoughts, *Psal.* 139. from the first to the twelfth, he manifests what continuall apprehension he had of Gods Greatnesse, Majesty, and Omnipresence; and what effect had this? *When I awake I am even before thee, vers.* 17. Look what objects they are, have most strong and deepe impressions in the mind, of those when a man awaketh, he thinks of first. Now such strong impressions had *Davids* thoughts of God, that still when he awaked, he was with him, and therfore we find it by experience to be a meanes to avoyd distractions in prayer, to enlarge a mans thoughts in his preparations before, or at the beginning with a consideration of Gods attributes and relations to us: and it will and doth make us serious.

Fourthly, especially do this when thou *awakest*, as *David* did there, *when I awake* I am still with thee: to prevent wind which ariseth from emptinesse, men use to take a good draught in the morning, which the stomack feeds; so to prevent those vaine, windy, frothy thoughts the heart naturally ingenders, and which arise from emp-

tineſs; firſt fill thy heart with the thoughts of God; *Goe downe into his Wine-celler*: obſerve it when you will, when you firſt open your eyes, there ſtand many ſuitors attending on you, to ſpeake with your thoughts, even as clients at Lawyers dores, many vanities and buſineſſes; but ſpeak thou with God firſt, he will ſay ſomething to thy heart, will ſettle it for all day: and this doe before the croud of buſineſſes come in upon thee. Of ſome Heathens it is ſaid that they worſhip *that* as their *God*, for all day, which they firſt ſee in the morning; ſo it is with the idols of mens hearts.

Fifthly, have a watchfull eye, and obſerve thy heart all day, though they croud in, yet obſerve them, let the know that they paſſe not unſeen; if a man would pray aright, hee muſt watch alſo, who comes in, and who goes out: where ſtrict watch and ward is kept, and Magiſtrates obſervant, the Marſhall and Conſtable diligent to examine vagrant perſons, you ſhall have few there; that ſuch ſwarmes of vagrant thoughts make their rendevouz, and paſſe, is becauſe there is not ſtrict watch kept.

This is in a manner all thou canſt do, for they will paſſe however, but yet complaine thou of them, whip them, and give them their paſſe.

Sixthly, pleaſe not thy fancy too much with vanities and curious ſights, this engenders vaine thoughts, therefore *Iob* ſayes, *chap.* 31. *verſ.* 1.

That he made a covenant with his eyes, leſt he ſhould thinke of a Maid, Prov. 4. 25. *Let thine eyes looke right on.*

Seventhly, be diligent in thy calling, and *what thine hand finds to do, do it with all thy might*, as it is, *Eccleſiaſtes* 9. 10. that is, putting to all the intention and ſtrength of the minde that may be in it. Let all the ſtreame run to turn about thy Mill, the keeping thy thoughts to that channell, keeps them from overflowing into vanity and folly, 2 *Theſ.* 3. 11. *Thoſe that labour not are buſie bodies.* And 1. *Tim.* 5. 13. *Idle, wandring* περιεργοι. they are not onely called ἀργοι, *Idle* onely, becauſe not buſie about what they ſhould, but περιεργοι, as intent on things they ſhould not; they goe from houſe to houſe: ſo their bodies do, becauſe their minds do wander, having no center. When *David* walked alone, what extravagancy did his ſpirit run into? let the ground lye fallow, and what weeds will there ſoone grow in it? God hath appointed us our callings to entertaine our thoughts, and to finde them worke, and to hold them doing in the *interims*, betweene the duties of his worſhip, becauſe the ſpirit and thoughts of men are reſtleſſe, and will bee buſied ſome way; as therefore Kings keepe thoſe men that have active ſpirits in continuall imployment, leſt their heads ſhould be working and plotting amiſſe: ſo did God appoint even in Paradiſe the active ſpirit of man, a calling to keepe him doing.

God

God hereby hedgeth in mans thoughts, and ſets them to go in a narrow lane, knowing that if they are unconfined and left at liberty, they would like wilde *Aſſes ſnuffe up the winde*, as *Ieremy* ſpeakes, *Ieremy* 2.24. onely take heed of encumbring thy mind with too much buſineſs, more than thou canſt graſpe. It made *Martha* forget that *one thing neceſſary*, being *cumbred with many things*, *Luke* 10.4. this breeds care μεριμνα, which diſtracts the minde, (ſo the word ſignifies) ἀπὸ τῦ μερίζειν, as *dividing it*, and ſo cauſeth wandring thoughts nothing more, ſo that the minde is not it ſelfe. For this weakens it, enervates it, and this being vanity, *Exodus* 18.18. ſaid *Iethro* to *Moſes*, when encombred with buſineſſe, *Thou wilt fade away as a leafe*, out of which the moiſture is dryed up, even that juyce which ſhould be left for good duties will be exhauſted, as dreames come through multitude of buſineſs, *Eccleſ.* 5.3. ſo do a multitude of thoughts from a cumber of buſineſſe.

Eighthly, in thy calling, and all thy wayes, for the ſucceſſe and thy wayes therein, *Commit thy wayes to God*, *Prov.* 16.3. *Commit thy way unto the Lord, and thy thoughts ſhall be eſtabliſhed, or ordered*: that is, kept from that confuſion and diſorder, and thoſe ſwarms of cares, which others are annoyed with: and thereby thy aymes may be as well accompliſhed: a few thoughts of faith would ſave us many thoughts of cares

and

and feares, in the businesses we goe about, which prove therefore *vaine*, because they forward not at all the businesse wee intend. When such waves tosse the heart and turmoile it, and the winds of passions are up, if a few thoughts of faith come into the heart, they calme all presently.

FINIS.

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PErlegi *hunc tractatum, cui titulus est* [The vanity of Thoughts] *in quo nihil reperio, quo minus imprimatur.*

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JOH. OLIVER.